Lafayette Historical Society **NEWS**

Enlightening Our Community

Lafayette, California | April 2012 | Vol. 40, No. 2

Two Events for LHS Supporters in April and Our Annual Potluck in May

Lafayette Historical Society's Speaker Series

Downtown Lafayette – Then & Now

Wednesday, **April 25, 2012** *~ 3:00 p.m.*

Speaker: **Mary McCosker,** co-author "Images of America – Lafayette"

Arts and Science Room *(Mezzanine Level)*

Lafayette Library *and* Learning Center • ***Limited seating***

Donation requested – **$10** LHS Members; **$15** for Non-Members

Please call LHS (925) 283-1848 *or email* Lafayette.history@comcast.net
for ***additional information*** *or* ***reservations***

– and –

A Special Walking Tour with Lafayette Historical Society

Downtown Lafayette – Then & Now

Sunday, **April 29, 2012** *~ 1:30 p.m.*

Tour Leaders: **Mary McCosker,** co-author "Images of America – Lafayette"
AND **Michelle Chan,** Historic Downtown Lafayette expert

Meet at the LHS History Room in the Library & Learning Center
(Enter on Golden Gate Way)

Donation requested – **$10** LHS Members; **$15** for Non-Members

(***Please note:*** *The walking tour will be about an hour of walking on flat, paved surfaces. Please wear* ***flat, comfortable walking shoes****.)*

More about the April events on Page 3 and All about the Annual Potluck on Page 4.

President's Message

If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development - Aristotle

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your annual **LHS** membership. Your support helps us to document the history of our community and History Room and to continue to provide quality historical programs. **Here are dates for some upcoming programs:**

Wednesday, **April 25** at *3 pm*: **Downtown Lafayette: Then and Now** in the ***Arts and Science Room*** at the Library.

Sunday, **April 29** at *1:30 pm*: **A Walking Tour of Downtown Lafayette** - meet at the **History Room** on Golden Gate Way *(lower level of the Library)*

Wednesday, **May 9: Annual Pot Luck and Membership Meeting** - Speaker: **Mary Volmer,** ***history professor at St. Mary's College***, on **"Women of the Gold Rush"**.

Lawn-O-Matic, the only mower with a brain in its head.
–Michael Troutman

Many, many thanks to **Michael Troutman** for updating our **LHS website** and for all of the other work he has done in the **History Room**. ***He's absolutely indispensable!!*** When you have an opportunity take a look at the changes www.lafayettehistory.org.

Welcome to two new Board members-elect: **Ruth Bailey** and **Michael Troutman**. They will be elected as "official" members of our Board at the **Annual Meeting** on **May 9th**.

In this issue please read about two of our other super-volunteers: **Sande Hubbs** and **Nancy Flood** *(also a hard-working Board member)!!*

And since we're dealing with history it would be important to acknowledge our **LHS Vice-President Marechal Duncan** who celebrated his *90th birthday* on **March 17th**. Our organization is only one of the many groups he is part of and we are all the better for his time and talent!!

If you've not renewed your membership, please consider doing so. And if you are receiving this as an eNewsletter and are not a member, *just think how your nominal membership dues could help build and support our Society!*

—Mary McCosker

Join us at our April Events!

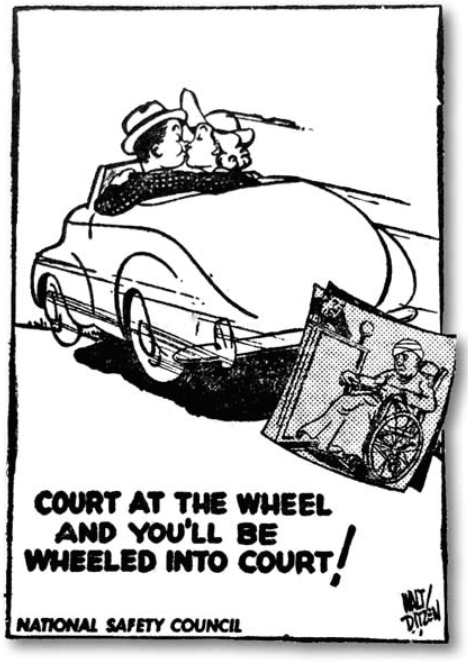
Are you smarter then a third grader? *Now is the time to find out!* And if you are not, you will be at the end of this exceptional pair of informative and fun events from the **Lafayette Historical Society** in April. Mark your calendars now and call LHS at (925) 283-1848 or send an email with your reservation request to **Lafayette.history@comcast.net**

Lafayette is one of the oldest settlements in Contra Costa County and several of the original buildings from the past remain in current use. Our rich history lives in these buildings today!

The presentation on ***April 25*** will introduce you to the history of this interesting town. From it's founding in 1848 when **Elam Brown** built the first house, through the growth and establishment of the La Fayette Post Office in 1857. Learn where the first general store was built, the second school house and the third school house. These are all buildings that still exist more than 150 years later. You'll visit them on the walking tour if you join us on ***April 29th!***

Post Office and Second Schoolhouse

Mary McCosker, a Lafayette native, is a self-described history nut. Give her an excuse and she will dive into investigating any historical question put before her. She is the co-author of "**Images of America – Lafayette**", a teacher of the History of Lafayette to third-graders in local schools through a program supported by "**Lafayette Partners in Education**" (LPIE) and the current president of the Lafayette Historical Society.



Distracted driving was a concern in 1948.
–Michael Troutmen

Mary's deep-rooted knowledge of the area and her sense of humor promise to make these events extraordinary.

Michelle Chan also a longtime Lafayette resident and has been an LPIE instructor. She currently leads downtown tours for third-graders in Lafayette schools.

Lafayette Historical Society's Annual Potluck Dinner

DATE: **Wednesday, MAY 9, 2012**

PLACE: Lafayette Library & Learning Center – *Community Hall*

TIME: ***6:00 p.m.*** Social Hour
6:45 p.m. Dinner
7:30 p.m. **Short business meeting** followed by

DISCUSSION: **Mary Volmer**, author of "Crown of Dust"

TOPIC: Mary will tell stories that link the fiction and history of some of California's most famous *(and infamous)* female residents.

PRICE: **$10.00 per member; $15. Non-member donation requested**

PLUS: Please bring your favorite hearty salad or casserole *(remember to bring serving utensils)*

Dessert and coffee will be provided by LHS Board Members

For questions or reservations **please call - (925) 283-1848 or email– Lafayette.history@comcast.net**

Imagining History's Lost Voices: the Women of the Gold Rush

"In the small settlement of the Motherlode, a group of disparate characters have set up a community, held together by the formidable Emaline, hostess of the ***Wayside Inn***. It is there that Alex, on the run from something and disguised as a teenage boy, finds refuge. But once she strikes gold, buried secrets are revealed and danger surrounds her."

Above is an excerpt from "**Crown of Dust**" by **Mary Volmer**.

After *1848*, when gold was discovered in California, dreams of adventure and instant wealth made westward movement the all-consuming passion of the nation. "***Go West Young Man***" became the catch phrase of the era, but joining these young men was a hardy collection of women. Prostitutes and preacher's wives, escaped slaves and society women, reformers, teachers, saloon keepers, cross dressers, criminals…the women of the Gold Rush helped shape the region and the nation. Yet their stories have been largely forgotten.

Who were **Mary Ellen Pleasant**, **Georgiana Kirby**, **Mary Hallock Foote**, and **Madam Mustache**? If you don't know now you will when you attend the **LHS Annual Potluck** and this fascinating program.

Mary Volmer - Author

(Continued on page 7)

Volunteer & Supporters Appreciation Party

On **January 29, 2012**, volunteers and supporters celebrated **Lafayette Historical Society** accomplishments for 2011. In the ***History Room***, volunteers gave more than 1720 hours greeting and educating the public, organizing and adding to archives, entering historical materials and photos in the computers, doing research and giving tours to school groups and others. In addition, volunteers prepared historical displays for the Library, offered a series of historical programs, expanded the society's web site including adding photos and blogs, produced 4 on-line and in-print newsletters, provided columns on Lafayette history for the **Lafayette Today**, prepared graphics designs and recorded videos and tapes of local residents giving their memories and comments on living in Lafayette. ***"Old Betsy"***, the 1919/20 fire engine thrilled visitors in the **Heritage Collection Room** next to the ***History Room*** and participated in parades and car shows.

Nancy Flood, Joan Bruzzone, Sande Hubbs, Betsy Willcuts & Dave Long enjoy a moment in the History Room

To meet and/or learn more about joining this terrific group of volunteers keeping Lafayette history alive and available for our community, visit the ***History Room*** on *Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday* from *10 am to 2 pm*, visit our website at :

www.lafayettehistory.org or call *925/283-1848* and leave your name, phone number and email address.

—Betsy Willcuts

Yes, For Better Service, Shop in Lafayette, 1948.
–Michael Troutmen

History Room Happenings

Michael Troutman, **History Room Volunteer**, **Board Member-Elect** and classic movie buff has been carefully going through our extensive collection of "**Lafayette Sun**" newspapers researching movies that played at the **Park Theatre** through the years. Occasionally he comes along an advertisement that today seems quaint. We're sharing some of those findings in this issue of the Newsletter along with the movies playing at the theatre in those days. If you're interested in Michael's personal blogsite check out **www.ishootthepictures.com**

I need to rewatch Elephant, because right now I don't see what buying a place near a school has to do with target shooting, 1948.
–Michael Troutmen

Gary Miller is a frequent visitor these days. He's a member of the ***Acalanes Class of '61*** that will be celebrating their **50-year class reunion** in September. Gary's researching the **Lafayette Sun Newspapers** that we have in our archives. He's been able to find many articles that apply to his classmates through the years. Copies of the articles are posted to the class reunion's website **www.acalanes61.com.**

Next time you're in Millie's Kitchen for breakfast or brunch, check out the photos of old time Lafayette that are from the LHS photo collection. **Eve Clement** has been in the History Room and chosen old photos for her popular restaurant on Oak Hill Road from our collection of more that 4,000 images.

Here's something interesting that we learned as a result of a visitor's question. **Austin Payne** asked why there's a *weir* at the end of 4th Street. We went and looked at the *weir* and then looked through our photos. Not only do we have photos of that dam being built, we have the entire story about it! Watch for the story *(thanks to Austin's inquiry)* in the next issue of the **LHS Newsletter.**

Maybe YOU can help us! **LHS** is the benefactor of a large aerial photo of Lafayette and the surrounding area taken in 1961. We have a perfect spot for it with the ***Lafayette Heritage Collection*** in the library garage, but we don't have a way to get it here. The photo is 6X9-feet and mounted on heavy board. If you (or a friend) have a truck or trailer and would like to help us retrieve the photo, *we would appreciate your help!* Call us at (925) 283-1848 or send us a note to **lafayette.history@comcast.net** for more information.

—Judie Peterson

The Women of the Gold Rush

Continued from Page 4

During her engaging talk **Mary Volme**r will explore how the interplay of fiction and history allows for the compassionate re-imagining some of California's most famous (and infamous) female residents.

Mary Volmer was raised in Grass Valley, California and lives in our area. She was the recipient of a ***Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship*** to the **University of Wales**, ***Scholarship*** in creative writing at **Saint Mary's College**, California. She is now a professor and the founding Director of the **Saint Mary's College Honors Program** and happily at work on a second novel.

We'll be selling raffle tickets for "**Crown of Dust**" and **Ms. Volmer** will be available to sign copies of purchased copies of her book.

For questions about the event and reservations, please call *(925) 283-1848* or email **Lafayette.history@comcast.net**

Gala opening of the Lafayette Park Theater, 1941

–Michael Troutman

2012-2013 Board of Directors

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Contact Us: ..... History Room – 283-1848

– or – lafayette.history@comcast.net

Return Service Requested

Lafayette Historical Society
POST OFFICE BOX 133, LAFAYETTE, CA 94549
www.LafayetteHistory.org

Lafayette Historical Society Membership Application

(Please photocopy form for additional names)

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City-Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership Categories and Annual Dues

(Please check one)

- ❑ Student Membership $10.00
- ❑ Individual Membership $25.00
- ❑ Family Membership $50.00
- ❑ Sponsor Membership $500.00

Please indicate areas of special interest

- ❑ Publicity
- ❑ Research-Genealogy
- ❑ Telephoning
- ❑ Displays
- ❑ Oral Histories
- ❑ History Room
- ❑ Data Base Entry of Photos
- ❑ Photo Collection
- ❑ News Clippings
- ❑ Fire Engine
- ❑ Walking Tours-Outreach
- ❑ Other_____

Please mail this application to:

Lafayette Historical Society
P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, CA 94549